Obituary Tom Shipp 1934-2018

Tom was a founder member of the Society in 1962 and performed a number of roles on the Council over many years including President, Treasurer, General Secretary, Editor of the Proceedings and the 1982 Cumberland Geological Society (CGS) publication The Lake District. His contribution to the running of CGS was enormous and he maintained an active interest right up to his death on 30 October 2018, the day before his 84th birthday.

Tom spent his early years in Coventry. After Bablake School he studied Chemistry at Birmingham University, and it was during this time that he developed his interest in Geology, and also met his wife to be, Helen, through a mutual involvement in Folk Dancing. After two years of National Service, mainly in Germany, he took up a position at Workington Grammar School teaching Chemistry and introducing Geology, while living at nearby Hensingham and then Seaton. Sons John and David were born in 1961 and 1962 respectively.

Tom's main focus changed to Geology after his move to West Cumberland. He was an inspiring teacher in his school and extended his role of bringing the subject to a wider community through evening classes and numerous illustrated talks to a variety of groups. In the early 1970s he began involvement with examination board duties, serving as an examiner and member of the JMB preparatory sub-committees over a period of thirty years. He was invited to become a Fellow of the Geological Society in 1974, became a Chartered Geologist in 1990 and was awarded the CGS Charles Edmonds Prize in 1993. On taking early retirement from school teaching he used his considerable experience to advantage by becoming an Open University lecturer and tutor counsellor.

Living on the edge of the Lake District enabled Tom to enjoy a range of outdoor activities including membership of the Wasdale, then Cockermouth and finally Penrith Mountain Rescue Team. His knowledge and ability made him well-qualified for becoming an expedition leader for the British Schools Exploration Society in 1984 and for many years he was involved in candidate selection. He travelled widely through his connections with various organisations, preferring mainly cooler climates such as Iceland, Svalbard and the Falkland Islands and enjoyed family visits to Canada and holidays to warmer parts. He was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 1995 but adopted a philosophical approach and continued to make the most of life, with a memorable family expedition across the Grand Canyon in 1998 being one of the highlights. A life-long love of folk-dancing and choral singing led to his active involvement with a number of groups, most recently Penrith Singers after he and Helen moved to Clifton. Declining health necessitated a move into an apartment at Woodlands in Penrith in 2016, where, despite his worsening physical condition Tom retained his mental agility and acute interest in so many things, regularly supplying challenging quiz questions with Helen for the benefit of other residents. He also continued to attend Society functions whenever possible and meet up with old friends.

The CGS will always be grateful for, and appreciative of, the huge part played by Tom in its development from a small group of like-minded enthusiasts into the respected and active organisation it is today.

John Rodgers